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Ecclesiastical Organization in the History of Orthodoxy

by Rev. John Meyendorff

The New Testament writings give no precise definition of the internal organization of the Christian community. Moreover, this community was in existence before the New Testament accounts were written, and had a great influence on them. All the systems of church administration are therefore the outcome of a certain interpretation of the Bible, or rather of the ecclesiological conception presupposed by the Bible. "Let all things be done decently and in order" wrote St. Paul to the Corinthians (I. Cor. 14, 40). What is the criterion for defining this "order" (*taxis*) recommended by the Apostle? In St. Paul's view, this criterion is none other than the particular nature of each local community within which the Spirit permanently manifests the will of God. The community obeys "the law of the Spirit" (Romans 8, 2) and is the "body fitly joined together and compacted" which "maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love" (Ephes. 4, 16). "In every church" the Apostles "ordained (cheirotonesantes) elders" (Acts 14, 23 etc.) who formed an essential element in the order of the Church.

The Christian gathering over which these "elders" were called to preside was essentially sacramental in nature: by that we mean that those who formed it (inasmuch as they had received baptism) really did make up the Body of Christ, the family of God, a holy people of kings and sacrificers (I Peter II,5; Rev. I, 6; V, 10; cf. Exod. XIX, 6). The centre of their common life was their meeting: "where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18,20). Within this meeting the Christians formed the same community as that which met in the upper room, presided over by Christ Himself. The man who presides over the Christian gathering is therefore the image of the Lord.

This inner logic and ritual ecclesiological necessity made the whole Church accept without question, and in the very beginning of its existence, what is called today the "episcopate:" a single

head within each community surrounded by "elders", as the "senate" of the apostles surrounded Christ (cf. St. Ignatius of Antioch). Ever since the end of the first century, the episcopal system has unanimously been accepted by the Church and the ecclesiological foundation of this institution point to the extreme probability of its apostolic origin: the eucharistic gathering never could have more than one president.

The Bishop and the Christian Community during the first centuries.

Through its meaning and origin, the episcopal ministry is bound up with the local community. The Bishop is not an apostle, but the minister who, through the apostles, has received a special **charisma** to preside over the community. His essential functions are not of a missionary order (like those of the apostles), but are sacramental and pastoral. He is not only a "symbol" of Christ. Through him the presence of the Head is just as real as the presence of the Body is real in the community. "I beseech you", writes Ignatius of Antioch about the year 100, "seek to do all things in divine harmony, **under the presidency of the Bishop, who has the place of God at your meeting**" (Magn. VI). Every Christian community (every "parish", as we should say today) was originally presided over by a Bishop elected by that community and consecrated by the Bishops of the neighbouring communities. He therefore did not exercise his authority **upon** the Church but **within** the Church. The "apostolic succession" itself did not belong to him as an individual, but was transmitted to him by the apostolic Church to announce the faith of the apostles in his own community, which had elected him. The Bishop was thus both "the man of his Church", which he represented at the Councils, and the link uniting his Church to all the other Christian communities, many of which were represented at his consecration by their Bishops.

Within his Church the Bishop is therefore the High-Priest, the Teacher and the Shepherd. These three functions are based on the fact that the only High-Priest, the only Teacher and the only Shepherd of Christians is Christ himself and that the Church is really His Body. To be head of the Body is not a human ministry, but the ministry of Christ, although within the Church, the ministries of Christ are accomplished by men, receiving the gifts of the Spirit. Of course, like any other man, the Bishop may be unworthy of the charisma he has received, and the community is there to control him and correct him, if necessary. The "certain charisma

of truth" possessed by the Bishops, of which St. Irenaeus of Lyons speaks in the second century (Adv. Haer. IV, xl, 2) is not a personal infallibility but a confirmation of the fact that in the Church everything occurs within the sacramental setting of the eucharistic assembly, whose president is the image of our Lord Himself. A Bishop who is a heretic not only ceases to be a Teacher, but also loses the position which he occupied within the Church; since he is no longer the spokesman of Christ, he can no longer occupy "God's place" as High-Priest and Shepherd... The ministry of the sacrament is not a magic power transmitted to individuals, but an ecclesiastical function involving responsibilities and obligations, particularly that of preaching the Truth.

In the early Church there were thus many cases when Bishops were deposed as the result of protests from the congregation (Paul of Samosata). The question has also often been asked, whether a Bishop who had been a heretic and had then returned to Orthodoxy could be restored to his see; the practice of the Church varied greatly on this point. But it is important, I think, to emphasise that the Church never regarded the apostolic succession as a reality independent of the life of the Church as a whole and independent of the community within which the episcopal ministry is exercised.

The local churches were in close touch with one another. Their unity was based essentially on **the unity of faith**. "All who wish to see the truth can contemplate the tradition of the apostles manifested throughout the world in every Church" (St. Irenaeus, Adv. Haereses III, 3, 1). The grace of God, equally present in all the Churches, reveals **thesame** apostolic Truth in **every** Church. Any decision or declaration made by one of these Churches, if it is made **in Christ**, must **necessarily** be accepted by all the others or rejected, if it is not in accordance with the tradition. There is therefore no question here of a democratic "vote", but of the Church witnessing to the Spirit of Truth. No institutional criterion, except the Spirit Himself, can define the apostolic tradition and the "charisma of Truth" of every Bishop within his Church. The mutual agreement between the churches is therefore a sign given by God to His Church, sooner or later, sometimes after long struggles about dogma.

The first three centuries of the Church's history brought some notable changes, which were important later on in the organization of the Church. In the first place, the growth in the number of Christians made it essential to increase the number of episcopal

communities. Thus in the third century they became very numerous in the African Church. In Asia Minor and other places a different system was adopted; the Bishops of the towns sent elders to minister to the new communities; much more, they deprived the old "country-bishops" (*chorepiskopoi*) of their episcopal rights and reduced them to the status of parish priests. Thus the Bishop found himself at the head of several communities or parishes. Moreover, a certain hierarchy began to arise between the episcopal communities themselves. As far as their sacramental and pastoral functions were concerned, the Bishops remained essentially equal, but their communities were not all of equal importance. From the very beginning, the Church in Jerusalem thus had exceptional authority. Later on "the very large church, very old and universally known, founded in Rome by the glorious Apostles Peter and Paul" (St. Irenaeus, *ibid.* III, 3, 2) acquired special importance. Other churches, especially in the East, had greater influence when a decision had to be taken as to whether a certain doctrine should be accepted or rejected, whether a doubtful episcopal election should be confirmed or declared void, or how order should be restored in a community. This exceptional authority was acquired by the churches on different scores. The apostolic basis was particularly venerated in the West and Rome was the only church which could boast of it. In the East a great many communities were "apostolic" without question; apostolicity alone, therefore, did not bestow any special authority. Numerical importance and seniority, on the other hand, were the preponderant elements. Thus towards the end of the third century Rome, Alexandria, Antioch and, to a lesser degree Carthage, possessed exceptional influence in the Christian world. They were four of the most important cities in the Roman Empire.

The authority enjoyed by these churches was not a juridical power, which the other churches were to obey; a power of that kind could not have been reconciled with the ontological equality of all the communities. Their authority was a fact based on the real influence which they exercised. No decision could be considered definite until they had pronounced their opinion. Side by side with these big Churches of universal influence, all over the Christian world the most important communities possessed an authority greater than that of the small churches, which were often materially dependent and founded by missions from the cities. The Bishop from the city was regularly invited to the episcopal consecrations

in the district, and was the first person who was asked to give his opinion on controversial questions.

The Christian Church was confronted by this state of affairs when it was suddenly recognized at the beginning of the fourth century by its former persecutors, the Roman Emperors.

The Christian Empire and the Ecumenical Councils.

As Eusebius, the Church historian, tells us (*De Vita Constantini*, III, 6), the idea of an Ecumenical Council which would solve the Arian conflict, was born in the mind of the Emperor Constantine himself. He had hoped the Church would provide a united religious basis for the Roman Empire; but he found himself confronted by a Christian world which was divided on the question of the divinity of Christ. Determined to put an end to this quarrel, he had recourse to an expedient which was perfectly logical and in accordance with the Church tradition of the Local Councils: an assembly of all the men who possessed a teaching function in the Church. At the time, therefore, the Council of Nicaea had a value which was both ecclesiastical and political, and so had the Ecumenical Councils which succeeded it. The Faith defined by these Councils, which were always convened and often presided over by the Emperors, was regarded by the State as the official Faith, and coercive measures were taken (in the name of the State) against those who opposed the Councils. The decisions of the Councils were included in the official records of Roman law.

However, the Emperors soon realised that their desire (which was perfectly justified on the political plane) to create a universal ecclesiastical authority which would be legally compulsory for all, was derisory. Instead of putting an end to the quarrel, the Council of Nicaea was only one of its first stages. Arianism soon became so strong that Constantine himself and several of his successors were led to rescind Nicaea. The final triumph of Orthodoxy was brought about much later by the indefatigable struggle of its defendants: Athanasius of Alexandria and the Cappadocian Fathers, and not by the legal decision of a Council. The enormous prestige of the Council of Nicaea is therefore due to the fact that the Church admitted it afterwards as the faithful expression of the true apostolic doctrine. A Christian historian must recognise here the sovereign will of God, Who is true to His Church and independent of all human authority. For Nicaea could have been rejected and forgotten just as

easily as the (Monophysite) Council of Ephesus (449) and the unionist Assembly of Florence (1439), both of which fulfilled the criteria generally admitted for the composition of an Ecumenical Council. The Ecumenical Councils were therefore instituted by the Empire, but the Church turned them into an adequate expression of its doctrine, subject not to the law of the State but solely to the power of the Spirit.

On the plane of church organization the Ecumenical Councils have clearly played an important role. Nicaea proclaimed a general principle which will determine the later structure of the Church: the administration of the Church will have to conform with the civil circumscriptions defined by the State. This principle, defined by the Nicaean Fathers for obvious reasons of convenience, opened the way to very important development in church administration. Exceptions were only admitted by Canons 5 and 6 of Nicaea in favour of those Churches which enjoyed special prestige: Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem and a few others. By referring explicitly to the "old customs", the Council aimed at safeguarding the special "privileges" of these Churches and recognized their authority to be wider than the political districts in which they were geographically situated.

Metropolitans and Patriarchs.

The traditional regulation which laid down that the consecration of any Bishop should be effected by several neighbouring Bishops, naturally resulted in the formation of a local Council in every district. It met originally for consecrations, but soon developed into a permanent institution, it being stipulated in the old Canons that it should meet twice a year. (This was the origin of the "Synods" of our modern autocephalous churches, which have sole authority to decide on the consecration of Bishops.). The Bishop of the most important city in the district became its president. From the beginning, the Bishops of smaller communities were particularly anxious to receive recognition from this primate. Later on the Councils prescribed that all the episcopal elections should be necessarily recognized by him. The Bishop of the main city, or "metropolitan", thus became the head of an ecclesiastical district.

The decision of Nicaea which inaugurated the parallelism between the civil and ecclesiastic administrations, meant that the ecclesiastical district coincided with the imperial province or "eparchy".

The capital of the “eparchy” thus became automatically the seat of the metropolitan. Nevertheless, in certain provinces “the old customs” were safeguarded and the metropolitans continued to live in a different town from the civil governor of the province (for instance in Cyprus). The Roman Church, thanks to its exceptional prestige, continued, as in the past, to exercise “metropolitan” rights over a district much larger than a single “eparchy”. Ecclesiastical centralism was also safeguarded in Egypt; the “pope” of Alexandria succeeded in checking the schism of Meletius, which tended to set up metropolitan districts; he continued himself to control the Bishops of the six Egyptian “eparchies”, i. e. the Bishops of the whole civil “diocese” of Egypt. The Bishop of Jerusalem, although he was administratively subject to the Metropolitan of Caesarea in Palestine, continued to enjoy an “honorary privilege”. The Council recognised that the Church at Antioch had exceptional authority in all the “eparchies” of the “Eastern Diocese”.

Later, in the 5th and 6th centuries, a new “patriarchal” regime began to be introduced in the Church. It consisted mainly in extending a little further the parallelism between the organization of the State and the administration of the Church. The Council of Nicaea had decreed that the “metropolitan” had right of primacy: now rights of higher “primacy” were granted to some Bishops on the level of the civil “dioceses”. Rome acquired this right progressively over all the dioceses in the West. Alexandria and Antioch practically possessed similar rights already, since Nicaea, over the dioceses in Egypt and the East. Finally the “Patriarchate” of Constantinople was created for the dioceses of Pontus, Asia and Thrace, i. e. for Asia Minor and the south-eastern part of the Balkan peninsula.

The power of the “patriarch” consisted in the right of appeal, the right of annulment and sometimes the right of intervention in the internal affairs of the metropolitan provinces. Except in Egypt where there were no “metropolitans”, the Patriarch did not yet confirm all the episcopal elections, but only those of the metropolitans.

The two Romes: the Patriarchate of Constantinople

Already before Nicaea the Church of Rome enjoyed a special prestige in the Christian world. As we have already said, it was not a question of one Church having “power” over the others, but of an “authority”, justified not only by the fact that the Church

of Rome was founded by the Apostles, but also by its seniority, its numerical importance, and the incomparable prestige of the capital. None of these elements in itself was enough to give the Bishop of Rome special authority, but altogether they gave him a quite exceptional position. As for the church of the new capital of the Roman Empire, it took its place among the great churches of Christendom through another "fact": the real influence of the Bishop of Constantinople thanks to his direct, permanent access to the Emperor.

This priority given to Constantinople was not regarded by contemporaries as a caesaro-papist revolution, as Roman Catholic historians later asserted. It only showed that it was possible for any Church to play a primary role in Christendom, provided that the other churches recognised that its authority was justified. The second Ecumenical Council (381), which met at Constantinople, gave an official form to this special role of Bishop of the new capital. "The Bishop of Constantinople has the priority of honour after the bishop of Rome because Constantinople is a New Rome" (canon 3). Thus the capital was not recognised having any special right, but simply as having "priority of honour", with special authority (but not power) in the affairs of the Church. The increasing importance of Constantinople was not in competition with the Bishop of Ancient Rome, whose primacy was uncontested; it was directed against Alexandria which still claimed to be second in importance to Rome both in civil and in ecclesiastical affairs.

Nevertheless a process was taking place for Constantinople which we have already observed in the case of Alexandria and Antioch: their actual authority was progressively transformed into a legal authority, which the Councils finally declared official, thus giving Constantinople a legally permanent status among the other "patriarchates". The "authority" recognised in the year 381 was manifested in Constantinople's frequent interventions in the ecclesiastical affairs of the three civil "dioceses" of Thrace, Asia and Pontus. Saint John Chrysostom was one of the most active promoters of these interventions. Finally, the Council of Chalcedon (451) defined the legal setting of Constantinople's authority; like Rome, Alexandria and Antioch, its authority would be exercised over several dioceses; the Bishop of the capital would confirm the episcopal elections of the metropolitans in all these territories (Canon 28). This power was defined by the parallelism between the two

Romes: "rightly esteeming that the city honoured with the presence of the Emperor and the Senate, and enjoying the (civil) prerogatives equal to those of ancient imperial Rome, (we agree with the Fathers of the year 381 that the New Rome) should also enjoy higher rank in ecclesiastical affairs, being second to it in rank".

The ecclesiology which lies behind this text of Chalcedon is perfectly clear: all the churches are equal among themselves; priority could only be determined if it were based on the actual authority possessed by certain churches. Thus Rome held the first place and enjoyed certain corresponding rights. Constantinople also ought to enjoy similar rights, based on the already existing authority conferred on it through the presence of the Emperor.

St. Leo, Pope of Rome, refused to recognise this 28th canon of Chalcedon. But it is interesting to note that the texts which contain his protest insist less on the rights of Rome than on those of Alexandria and Antioch, which were recognised at Nicaea. St. Leo seems then to admit that the "privileges" of authority have no compulsory legal character, unless they are formally defined by Councils: his main point of reference is Nicaea, and not the "rights" of Rome.

The 9th and 17th canons of Chalcedon recognised Constantinople's right to receive appeals and to re-judge ecclesiastical disputes; this was again a parallel with Rome in favour of which the Council of Sardica had declared similar rights. Finally, in the 6th century, the Bishop of the capital took the title of "Ecumenical Patriarch". This title did not suppress the primacy of Rome anymore than his other rights; it only emphasised the political basis for his privileges, which were closely connected with those of the head of the Christian "Oikumene", the Christian Emperor of Constantinople. The title "ecumenical" was thus given not only to "pan-imperial" Council but also to certain officials in the capital, for instance the ecumenical "Master", who was head of the University of Constantinople.

Thus in the fifth century we see the so-called "Pentarchy" system firmly established in the Christian world: five "patriarchs" divided the "Oikumene" between themselves, and at the time of Justinian they were compared to the "five senses" of the Empire. Their respective rights were similar, but they all recognised the "primacy of honour" and the exceptional authority of Rome. In the East, however, this authority never became absolute: the possibility was unanimously

admitted that a pope might fall into heresy. Thus the VIth Ecumenical Council (681) had no scruple in condemning the memory of Pope Honorius who had supported, though quite involuntarily, the monothelite heresy.

The Schism

Most of the difficulties which arose between Rome and Constantinople in the ninth and eleventh centuries appear very unimportant to us today. One may feel surprised that such differences could have provoked the greatest scandal known to Christendom. But behind these difficulties lay a deep difference, which very few people realised at the time (except perhaps the great Patriarch Photius): the two halves of the Christian world had different conceptions concerning **the way to solve the difficulties**. For the West, Rome was the ultimate criterion and the supreme judge, whereas the East remained loyal to a "conciliatory" conception of the Church, while recognising the primacy of Rome and its exceptional, though informal, authority in ecclesiastical affairs. Due to very laudable efforts of Patriarch Photius and Pope John VIII, the conflicts of the ninth century were finally solved at the council of 879-880. In the eleventh century, the lack of a common criterion became really fatal.

We do not know the exact date of the final rupture between Rome and Constantinople. It probably occurred at the beginning of the eleventh century, when the Germanic emperors finally imposed the "*filioque*" on the Roman Church, which was then in a complete state of decadence. The unity of faith was thus broken between East and West. The events of 1054, which are usually regarded as the rupture itself, were really an unsuccessful attempt to reach an agreement, initiated by the Byzantine Emperor.

The two halves of Christendom were already speaking a different ecclesiological language. The contempt of the Byzantines for western "barbarism" (which was justified from the human but not from the Christian point of view), and the phantastic ignorance of the leaders of the Roman Church (according to Humbert, the Roman Legate, the "*filioque*" was part of the original text of the Creed!) were the "non-theological factors" which helped to perpetuate the rupture.

On the level of ecclesiastical organization, the schism had extremely important practical consequences for the Eastern Church:

the primacy of honour and the right of appeal became the exclusive privilege of the Church of Constantinople — the New Rome. Thus the Church testified its basic doctrine on the ontological identity of the local churches: the primacy is not the proper prerogative of any particular See; it is entrusted to the Church which can exercise it best, while remaining loyal to Orthodoxy. However, it is certain that on the level of ecclesiastical organization which concerns us here the loss of an ecclesiastical authority situated outside the political limits of the Empire resulted in linking the ecclesiastical administrative machinery still more closely to the organization of the Byzantine State, and later on to the national monarchies of the Christian countries in the East.

The Byzantine Church

During the whole period between the eleventh and fifteenth centuries, the Patriarchate of Constantinople was uncontestedly the centre of Orthodoxy. But as in the past, the Church continued to be governed by the old Canons and the Patriarch never claimed any sort of infallibility or any superior authority upon the decisions of the Councils. One sometimes wonders why no Ecumenical Council was held during this period. The reason is quite simple: the concept of the "Oikumene" was a political idea used to describe the universal Roman Empire, of which the Orthodox Emperor of Constantinople continued (legally, at least) to be the head. In principle this Empire included the West. If he had convened an Ecumenical Council without the Western churches, this would have implied that the sovereign of Constantinople renounced his own rights to the universal Empire. On two occasions he consented to united Councils of this kind, giving them the title of "ecumenical": the Councils were held at Lyons (1274) and at Florence (1439) but were failures and their only effect was to deepen the schism still further.

However, the absence of Ecumenical Councils did not mean that the Orthodox Church was unable to deal with theological controversies or to pronounce definitions of dogma. It did so on several occasions. For instance the Councils held in 1341, 1347, 1351, and 1368 defined the Orthodox doctrine of grace, and their decisions (which were included in the "Synodicon" of Orthodoxy and in the liturgical books in use throughout the Church) were considered as official Orthodox doctrine. Other examples could be quoted. The Church thus testified that its doctrine is not limited by the decisions of

Ecumenical Councils, and that the definition of this doctrine can and must take place every time this is necessary to safeguard Orthodoxy — for the sole guardian of truth is the Spirit of Truth, who is loyal to the Church.

As in the past the Patriarch of Constantinople continued to be the Bishop of the capital of the Empire. His power was therefore closely connected with that of the Emperors, the Byzantine "theocracy" being a sort of "diarchy" of the Emperor and the Patriarch, the two most essential members of the State", as Patriarch Photius says in the "Epanagoge". It would be erroneous, however, to consider the Byzantine regime as a form of caesaropapism. Even after the separation from Rome, the Church did not pay allegiance to the state, but had concluded with it what Father Schmemann once called a dogmatic alliance." The Emperor possessed an authority which was officially recognised for defining the limits of the patriarchates and of the ecclesiastical provinces; he often also had the casting vote when patriarchs were appointed; but he had no power over the canons and dogmas defined by the Church. Thus several emperors incurred excommunication for having infringed the rules of the church: Leo VI through his fourth marriage, Michael VIII Palaeologus for having betrayed Orthodoxy by joining Rome.

The authority of the Byzantine Patriarch threw the other eastern patriarchs into the shade — the patriarchs of Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem who lived in countries ruled by Islam. But they never formally contested their rights.

When Constantinople itself fell finally to the Turks in 1453, the authority of the Patriarch of New Rome was even reinforced. The new Mohammedan rulers invested him with civil and legal authority over all the Christians within the Ottoman Empire, for which he became responsible in the eyes of the Turkish Government. Without modifying his canonical rights, this decision on the part of the Turks gave the Patriarch very extensive power, though it was often controlled by the Government.

the Slavic Churches

One of the glories of Orthodox Byzantine Christianity is its missionary work towards the North. Beginning with the ninth century several Slavic people were baptised by Greek missionaries and received the cultural heritage of the Christian East. One of the inevitable elements of this heritage was the political system of Byzantium.

In theory the Byzantine Empire was not a national state but the universal City of God established on earth. On many occasions the emperors drew attention solemnly in official documents to their status as sovereigns over all Christians. It was only owing to this status that the Universal Church had recognised them as protectors and that they convened the Ecumenical Councils. In practice, however, the Byzantine Empire had become a monolithically Greek state ever since the seventh century. This ethnic character of the Byzantine state after the seventh century made the universal mission at which it aimed more delicate, and it entitled the new Slavic states, Bulgaria and Serbia, to make use of the Byzantine heritage for their own advantage. In their respective capitals they created concurrent little "Byzantiums". When the political and military situation permitted, they even went so far as to claim the universal Orthodox Empire for themselves. In practice, however, they created national churches which led an independent life while recognising the "primacy of honour" of the eastern patriarchs. Byzantine theocracy thus gradually evolved into ecclesiastical nationalism.

The Byzantine Patriarch recognised the right of the new churches to elect their Bishops and primates themselves, a right which certain eastern provinces of the Eastern Church — like Cyprus or Georgia — had possessed for some time. But every time that the political situation or the fortune of war permitted, Constantinople suppressed the political and ecclesiastical independence which it had only half-heartedly admitted, and re-established the authority of the New Rome in the East. The last time that it did so was under the Turkish regime, when the Patriarch was enthroned by the Sultans as Head of the Orthodox Christians of the Ottoman Empire.

The resentment felt by modern Slavic historians against Byzantium is therefore comprehensible, but it can be only partly justified. They often forget that in the Middle Ages "nationalism" (in the modern sense of the word) was unknown, both in the West and in the East. Everyone then admitted in principle the universality of Christendom expressed within a single Empire. The "national" independence then constituted a "disorder" which was prejudicial to the Christian cause. The Emperor and the Byzantine Patriarch therefore had the formal right to put an end to it. Their policy undeniably favoured one nationality at the expense of the others, but this "reverse side of the picture" only illustrated the decadence

of the “theocratic idea” itself, and this decadence was provoked by the appearance of nationalism, both Greek and Slavic.

Russia

The relations of Russia with the Mother-Church of Byzantium were never exactly the same as those of the Slavs in the Balkans. The State of Kiev had become a Christian principality in the tenth century but did not enjoy ecclesiastical autonomy until the fifteenth, although an attempt in this direction had been made right at the beginning of its existence. Being further away from Byzantium, Russia felt the sovereign authority of Constantinople less than Bulgaria or Serbia and did not rebel against it. The Metropolitans of Kiev were therefore always nominated by the Byzantine Patriarch and were always Greeks (with a few exceptions).

This system of ecclesiastical administration had deep consequences for the later destiny of Russian Christianity. The Byzantine Church, which was anxious to keep close ecclesiastical control over the immense territories in the North, did not favour the consecration of local Bishops of Russian origin. The Greek metropolitan who lived at Kiev, at Vladimir, and later at Moscow, was really the sole head of an immense diocese and the rights of the Russian clergy under his control were strictly limited. This was the origin of the centralism of the Russian Church, which was quite contrary to the ancient canons and to the practice of the Eastern and Balkan Churches.

The ecclesiastical situation was completely changed in Russia in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The Church of Russia was divided into two metropolitan districts: that of Kiev in the Grand-Duchy of Lithuania (which was soon to fuse with the Kingdom of Poland), and that of Moscow. The metropolitan district of Kiev remained attached to the Patriarchate of Constantinople until the seventeenth century. The metropolitan district of Moscow became “autocephalous” in the fifteenth century and was raised to a patriarchate in the sixteenth.

The Church of Moscow inherited the ecclesiastical centralisation instigated by the Byzantine administration. The patriarch was admitted to the fifth place (after Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem); it thus constituted one of the pillars of the new State which claimed to be the heir of the universal Christian Empire — the “Third Rome”. But the “symphony” between

Church and State (the ideal of Byzantine theocracy) was never realised in Russia. Long before Peter the Great, and contrarily to what is generally thought, the Tsars of Moscow had derived their political ideology from the West rather than from Byzantium. The Middle Ages were over. By becoming independent and by accepting the alliance of the Moscovite State, the Church of Russia had lost the support of the distant Patriarch of Constantinople and was subject to the State to an extent never experienced by the Byzantine Church. Among the patriarchs there were only few great characters who succeeded in imposing their will on the State. The most famous was undeniably Nikon in the seventeenth century, who carried out a reform of the liturgy in Russia in order to bring the Russian practice into conformity with the contemporary Greek practice; he was the real master of Russia for some years.

In order to avoid similar events, Peter the Great suppressed the patriarchate at the beginning of the eighteenth century (thus violating the tradition of the Canons) and replaced it by the "Holy Synod". This institution was modelled closely on the ecclesiastical organisms of Protestant Europe; it was an integral part of the State (parallel to the Senate) and its decisions had to be submitted to the approval of the Tsar. A state official, the "higher-procuror", attended the meetings of the Synod (which was composed of a limited number of Bishops and priests) and he was the real head of the synodal administration. This administration accentuated the centralism of the Church still more in favour of an anonymous collegiate institution strictly controlled by the State. The Bishops in Russia had never been in close touch with their dioceses, which were too vast and too dependent; after Peter the Great they became officials of the synodal administration, frequently transferred from one see to another, in violation of the Canons.

This state of affairs continued until 1917. From the end of the nineteenth century public opinion unanimously demanded a reform, and special commissions made a great deal of work for this purpose. The Church of Russia was therefore better equipped to confront the revolution than it is often thought. A Council which met in Moscow in 1917 and 1918 thoroughly reformed the administration of the Church by re-establishing the Patriarchate, arranging for the Bishops to be elected by the people, and giving the laity opportunities to participate in every aspect of Church life. But the Council did not re-establish in Russia episcopal community of

the Early Church: the dioceses remained too vast and the central administration of the Patriarchate (which included some lay representatives) still had the right to encroach upon some of the traditional rights of the local Bishops. The reforms of 1917-18 were inspired by the ideal of the "sobornost" and preferred to express it through a "democratic" administration on the national plane, rather than to restore the link between the local Bishop and his Church. But although these reforms did not restore certain canonical standards of the old Church, they opened the door for their revival.

Circumstances did not permit these decisions to be carried out completely. When the Patriarchate of Moscow reappeared in 1945, they were officially suppressed and replaced by an absolute patriarchal autocracy which was quite as severe as that of the Holy Synod. The administration of the church in Russia today differs, therefore, from that in the East and in the Balkans in two ways. In the first place, the Russian Church has a centralised discipline which places the Bishops in close dependence on the Patriarch; he has authority, with the formal approval of a small synod, to transfer them, to reward them with honorary distinctions, or to force them to retire. The second difference is that the Russian Church has very few dioceses (only 69 for nearly one hundred million Orthodox Christians, whereas Greece has 81 dioceses for seven million believers); the Russian Bishop is therefore a large-scale administrator who only has chance contacts with his flock.

The modern "autocephalous" churches

The progressive liberation of the Balkan peninsula from Turkish domination and the appearance of a number of new, independent states, had immediate repercussions within the Church. Ever since the Council of Nicaea the Orthodox Church had adopted the principle of dividing up its dioceses so that their frontiers coincided with the political frontiers of the provinces or States. The new political situation thus demanded a reform of church administration.

On the strictly canonical plane, "autocephaly" is the right granted to a diocese or group of dioceses to elect its own Bishop or Bishops. During the very early days of Christianity every local Church was therefore "autocephalous". Today the autocephalous Archbishop of Sinai is a relic of that old custom. However, as we pointed out above, the authority of the Bishops of the large towns

(Metropolitans) who were regularly called upon to consecrate Bishops in less important churches, soon acquired the official right to confirm all the episcopal elections in their province. Even today the fact that the Archbishop of Sinai is consecrated by the Patriarch of Jerusalem gives the latter a certain authority over that ancient autocephalous diocese. Thus "autocephaly" almost always became the privilege of a province including several dioceses.

Although "autocephaly" in the strictly canonical sense remained a simple right for a province to elect its own Bishops, in the nineteenth century it acquired a new meaning: it identified itself, at least as far as the Balkans were concerned, with the absolute independence of the new national Churches. This psychological evolution was clearly linked up with the appearance of a modern form of nationalism unknown in the Middle Ages. The ideologists of the new "autocephalies" were not solely responsible for this; their action was often provoked by the confusion (often admitted by the Phanar) between the interests of Orthodoxy and those of modern Hellenism. All the Slavic churches began to seek independence from Constantinople.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, seven autocephalous or autonomous churches appeared in the Balkans: four of Serbian language*, two Roumanian-speaking*, and one Roumanian-Serb**. Their boundaries corresponded with the administrative districts of Austria-Hungary and the Turkish Empire. After the first World War the Archbishop of Belgrade, who had been raised to the rank of Serbian Patriarch (1920), grouped the Serbian Churches around him. In 1925 the Roumanian Churches also united under the Roumanian Patriarch. The case of the Bulgarian Church caused a series of troubles: the negotiations between the Bulgarian representatives and the Ecumenical Patriarch were obstructed by the existence of a large Bulgarian population in Constantinople itself. The Bulgarians claimed that these people were also subject to the authority of the new Bulgarian "autocephaly", as far as church affairs were concerned. A system of this kind would have been an official admission of the existence of two parallel church hierarchies on the same

* Montenegro, the Patriarchate of Carlovitz, the Archbishopric of Belgrade, the autonomous Church of Bosnia — Herzegovina.

* Roumania and Transylvania

** Bukovina

territory. It was impossible to avoid a rupture: in 1872 the Council of Constantinople officially condemned the primacy of nationalism in church affairs. It is interesting to note that the Orthodox Church officially condemned this psychological malady, just at the dawn of an epoch in which Orthodoxy all over the world was to suffer as a result of ecclesiastical nationalism. The "Bulgarian schism" was settled in 1945; Bulgarian autocephaly was then established and recognised without any infringement of the "territorial" principle.

It is a regrettable fact, however, that after 1920 the "nationalisation" of the Orthodox autocephalies dispersed in different countries, gave rise to violations of the territorial principle, especially in America, and these violations did considerable harm to the Orthodox message in the world.

In addition to the autocephalies in Serbia, Roumania and Bulgaria, in the nineteenth century the "Church of Hellade" sprang up in the Kingdom of Greece (1850). In the twentieth century autocephalous churches finally appeared in Albania, Poland and Czechoslovakia; no definite solution has yet been found for their canonical position.

The Eastern Patriarchates today

In spite of the relatively small number of their faithful, the four ancient Patriarchates of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem constitute an extremely important symbol for all Orthodox Christians, and maintain incontestable authority. This remnant of the old "Pentarchy" of the five Patriarchs prevents the universal Orthodox Church from becoming a "federation" of national autocephalies organised on over-secularised principles.

The Patriarchate of Constantinople occupies the first place, which formerly belonged to the Church of Rome. By virtue of his authority as Primate, the Ecumenical See often had to intervene (like ancient Rome) in church disputes. Differences of opinion have recently come to light concerning the exact interpretation of this primacy, which is considered by some as being contrary to the equality of the autocephalous "sister-Churches" and to promote a kind of "papism". Some canonical error on the part of Constantinople may have provided a pretext for this opposition. But it is an incontestable fact that the authority of the "primus inter pares" is an integral part of Orthodox ecclesiology and that the

present position of the Patriarch of Constantinople — whom events have placed outside the geographical limits of nationalism — could normally give him an opportunity to exercise that authority fruitfully, in the measure in which he accepts not to identify his function with any kind of nationalism.

Monasticism

The monasteries have always occupied a special place in the Orthodox Church, while conforming with the essential principles which reflect the nature of the Church. Monasticism, which appeared in the third and fourth centuries, has always been valuable as a prophetic witness. When the Christians "settled down" in this world under a Roman Empire which was nominally Christian, the monks went off into the desert saying that it was impossible for the Church to be "reconciled" with the world which always remains fallen and sinful. When people tended to identify mediaeval Christianity with "the City of God", the very existence of the monks was a reminder that the City of God will not be established on earth until the last day. In order to carry out this witness, the monks had to form separate communities, and that is the origin of certain "episcopal" characteristics with which the abbots (or igumens) of monasteries were invested. However, the Church could not allow its own unity to be disturbed, and the witness of the monks had to remain within the sacramental body of the Church. Hence Orthodox Canon Law firmly maintains the principle of the submission of the monasteries to the local diocesan Bishops. No "monastic orders" have ever appeared in the Orthodox Church like those in the West, which enjoy an "exemption" which makes them directly dependent upon the Pope.

Within the Church the monks formed a spiritual elite which exercised tremendous influence on the life of the Church as a whole. In the sixth century the Canon Law stipulated that the episcopacy must be drawn from the monastic body; this law is still valid today.

Conclusion

The Orthodox Church, even today, has no exhaustive Canon Law comparable with the "Corpus juris canonici" of the Roman Church. The Councils have never claimed to compose any document of this kind, and the "Nomocanon" itself (a Byzantine collection of canonical and legislative texts concerning church life) merely summarised and classified the few rules which had almost

all been enacted by the church authority in order to settle certain definite cases. It is therefore not surprising that there should be disagreements about the canon law in the Orthodox Church right up to the present time, and that the old canons should be interpreted in different ways.

Nevertheless Orthodoxy remains surprisingly faithful to certain basic principles which have ruled the life of the Church since the earliest times. If we try to express these principles we immediately see that they are not canonical rules in the proper sense; they are rather the outcome of a theological conception of the Church which could not possibly be fitted into a juridical frame. The canons have therefore no purpose except to indicate how we can remain faithful to the nature of the Church in the different historical circumstances in which we find ourselves.

The Church recognizes that these indications in the canons are not complete, and in certain cases she applies the principle of "economy" by infringing the rules when this serves the common good, without modifying the rules themselves. Thus the Church admits that a Bishop may change his see, while at the same time it maintains the principle that an episcopal election definitely binds the pastor to his Church... The application of the principle of "economy" is particularly evident in the different practices which have existed for admitting non-Orthodox Christians into the Church: sometimes mere schismatics have been re-baptised, while real heretics have been admitted after a simple penance, just as the Church daily re-admits its own members who have sinned. Indeed, how could the Church have defined (for the purpose of canon law) a fact as contrary to its own nature as the division of Christians? It applied different remedies to the malady of schism, and it is this very diversity in the remedies which can effect the cure.

The application of the principle of "economy" can, however, lead to the greatest abuses when it is confused with the norm itself. The unity of the Church, which is one of the essential elements of its nature, requires that Orthodox Christians living in the same place should form a single community and be under the authority of a single Bishop. As we have seen above, the defence of this principle was the cause of the "Bulgarian schism" of 1872. But do not the Orthodox "dispersed" in America or Europe make a point today of systematically infringing this principle, without having any "economy" to justify them?

During its history Orthodoxy has passed through considerable variations in church administration, and it will probably experience still further variations in future. But these variations are only justified if they conform with the nature of the Church, with the expression of its Unity, Holiness, Apostolicity and Catholicity.

Within the Christian tradition which grew out of the Reformation, the question of church administration is usually regarded as secondary. This is not true of Orthodoxy. We believe that the normative elements of the ecclesiastical structure are part of the Revelation, inasmuch as the Church (in accordance with the will of its Head) is a permanent, living organism existing in history. These norms are not human in origin; they are fixed by the sacramental nature of the Church which assumes an organised community which is always identical to itself and identical to other communities which are equally faithful to the Apostolic message. Being human, we may betray this message; but God does not betray His people nor does He modify the nature of the redemptive grace which is always present in the Church of God. There have, therefore, been "legitimate" variations in the rules of church administration in history; others were contrary to the nature of the Church. The former were inevitable and helped to strengthen the Christian message or to express it in forms suitable to the historic circumstances of the time (for instance, in face of the existence of a worldwide Christian Empire); the others, which were contrary to the nature of the Church, must be overcome (with the help of the Holy Spirit), so that the local church which adopts them may not become unfaithful to its Head.



A New Tendency in Anglican-Orthodox Relations

by Rev. William S. Schneirla

A full review of the formal exchanges of the past fifty years has appeared in Vasil T. Istavridis' "Orthodoxy and Anglicanism in the Twentieth Century", reprinted in English translation in **The Greek Orthodox Theological Review** Vol V, No. 1, Summer, 1959, and nothing in the way of historical description need be added to it. One or two additional emphases may be made on the basis of certain events and publications and in doing this a changing climate becomes evident. If we examine this most recent period against the past we find a certain stiffening on both sides, more tentative approaches, and less readiness to overlook or rationalize difference on the other side.

I have written in another place that the Moscow Conference between Anglican and Orthodox in 1956 exemplified a newer attitude with tendencies toward renewed appreciation of the respective traditions and no evidence of desire to compromise.¹

That judgement was based on the first papers from the Moscow Conference which had appeared in Russian translation in the *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*. I have since seen the little publication of some of the papers and excerpts from the discussions published by the SPCK, and also the longer, unpublished, minutes of the discussions and the full text of all of the papers. The discussions pointed up once again those differences which have appeared at all such conversations in the past — can the one, Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church in the world be divided as the Anglicans hold, or must it be one body as the Orthodox claim? Difference in regard to the character and role of Tradition and its relation to Scripture; some Anglican uncertainties about the number of the Councils.

On this last issue one of the Russians (Father Ruzhitsky) asked the Archbishop of York (discussions of Friday, July 20, 1956) how he should answer if asked how many Oecumenical Councils

¹ St. Vladimir's Seminary Quarterly, Summer, 1957.

the Anglicans accept. The Archbishop replied that while the Church of England has nowhere defined which Councils it accepts and believes that the Scriptures and Oecumenical Creeds are a sufficient statement of faith, some theologians had appealed to seven, some to four, and that the contents of the fifth, sixth and seventh Councils do not fit the historical situation of the West. He added that this extended answer was probably necessary because of sin. When further pressed to declare how many he recognized the Archbishop responded that he accepted the first four as being undoubtedly congruous with the faith of the **homoousion**, the fifth dealt with a technicality of which he had insufficient knowledge, the sixth he accepted but would have to explain in a totally different manner in England, and the seventh he accepted in so far as he understood it.

Neither on the Russian nor the English side was there an apparent desire to minimize in the interests of only apparent understanding and, although one feels that the conversations represent less in the way of advance from the Orthodox point of view than did the Bucharest Conference in 1936 the papers and discussions breathe the full spirit of Christian friendliness.

The Lambeth Conference of 1958 saw no repetition of the developed Anglican Orthodox discussions of the sort that took place in 1931. The official publication of the Resolutions and Reports contained a very brief statement reviewing contacts (pp. 2.29 and 2.50) and expressing satisfaction at the good relations which exist. I have had conversations with some of the members of the Orthodox delegation, and through the kindness of an Anglican friend I have read the minutes of the meetings held during the Conference between the delegates and some Anglicans, and I think it is fair to conclude that no new ground was broken.

It should be noted that Reports at this Lambeth Conference suggested a permissive attitude toward prayer for the departed, unction of the sick and the "Commemoration of Saints and heroes." This attitude reflects neither of the well-known extremes in Anglican practice and while it is curious that these usages are still at the exploratory stage more than a full century after the Tractarian movement, Orthodox must be encouraged at their persistence. Another thrust of Anglicanism of great although indirect concern to those Orthodox who hope for closer relations, is the formal tolerance of the Church of South India which represents

an attitude, ecclesiology, and polity utterly opposed to Orthodoxy.

The importance of wide informal contacts between representative Anglicans and informed Orthodox is most obvious in the light of some general Anglican activities related directly to the Orthodox Church. Discussions and declarations at official Conferences are meaningful only when seen in the full context of Anglican ecclesiastical life. The recent ordination of women in the Church of Sweden, a Lutheran body in some type of communion with the Church of England, underlines one Anglican endeavour that must be significant for an Orthodox understanding of Anglicanism. The outreach to the British free Churches is another, but certainly priority is taken by Anglican actions on the Church of South India. It would seem that Orthodox friends of Anglicanism should have focused full attention on this recent development, but there has been little published comment. The ecclesiology and polity of the Church of South India cannot be understood, much less justified, in terms of Orthodox tradition, as the nature of the agreements reached with the Church of England and the Episcopal Church of the United States are the very antithesis of Orthodox objectives in interconfessional relations. It is remarkable that Orthodox have appeared to be indifferent or unconcerned during the extended course of these negotiations which must condition the future of Anglicanism and the image Orthodox will form of it.

The Church of South India must be an invisible but very real participant in any future Anglican Orthodox Conferences, although it is probable that delegates from it will not attend or be invited. While our hierarchs have not yet demonstrated a brotherly helpfulness in reminding responsible Anglicans of the dangers implicit in the South India relationship, the Old Catholic Archbishop of Utrecht has seen the potential difficulties and courageously outlined them in a letter written to the Archbishop of Canterbury in October 1957 to which the latter replied in February of 1958. The correspondence merits reading in full,² and the quotations given here should stimulate interest rather than convey the impression that an accurate digest is given.

The Archbishop of Utrecht begins by saying that he writes for himself alone, having been assured by one of his correspondents

² The quotations which follow are from the texts as published on pp. 3-14 of **Faith and Unity** Vol. V, No.6, Winter. 1959-60.

(identical letters were sent to the Archbishop of York and the Presiding Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States) that a "memorandum" like this would not be considered as 'unwelcome,'" and in view of some voices of younger people in the Old Catholic church who would like to break off the Intercommunion agreement with the Anglicans. He objects, quite reasonably an Orthodox must agree, to the South India method of suspending judgement on the dogmatic content of the concept of the Sacraments while gradually integrating them into the ongoing life of the church, and questions the practicality of a "comprehensiveness" which tolerates a federation based on "divergent and contradictory" opinions.

The Archbishop fears that the Anglicans may compel the Old Catholics to break off intercommunion and "close the entrance door to the ancient Orthodox Church for good," by entering into communion with a body which cannot claim to represent "catholic" Christianity, (The Archbishop's understanding of "the Church" may be encountered in English in an article "Intercommunion: It's Basis, Content, and Consequences" in the **Anglican Theological Review**, January, 1956. It would be accurate to say that he is near the High Church Anglican ecclesiology once called the "Branch Theory.") and suggests that a waiting period of thirty years will give the Church of South India time to arrive at a degree of Catholicity which will not threaten the character of any church that associates with it.

In reply the Archbishop of Canterbury points out that Anglican action was demanded by the very fact that fifty percent of the members of the new Church of South India are former Anglicans, that "anomalies" exist in the new church, that recognition is accorded only to "episcopally ordained" (Anglican) ministers of the body on the assumption that the "Catholic element" in the Church of South India will prove dominant, and that if this hope is unfulfilled even the restricted terms of intercommunion may be further limited or abolished. He goes on to reassure the Old Catholic Archbishop that the Anglican Communion "stands unshakeably on its Catholic foundations," and concludes by recognizing the possibility of Orthodox and Old Catholic anxiety about Anglican attempts at Christian reunion while asserting that "It would be difficult for us to bring the Old Catholic or indeed the Orthodox into the various stages of these discussions."

From the Orthodox position there are tolerated within Anglicanism anomalies quite as striking as anything in the Church of South India. The Old Catholics are more directly involved, and hence concerned, since they are already in intercommunion with the Anglicans, but if Anglicanism is to grow toward Orthodoxy, and surely this is our hope and the end of the interminable negotiations, must not Orthodox hierarchs, or at least theologians, foster and encourage those tendencies among the Anglicans which we regard as positive? Catholic minded Anglicans faced the South India situation without the slightest support from the Orthodox, and this may well result in a slowing down of those forces which make for mutual attraction.

The internal life of the Church of South India does not appear to be evolving in the directions anticipated in the Archbishop of Canterbury's letter, nor was the later action of the Episcopal Church quite as cautious as that of its mother church. This developing situation will provide Orthodox with many opportunities for helpful comment.

It is perhaps indicative of a changed attitude that Anglicans find difficulty in "bringing" Orthodox into the various stages of these discussions "with the free churches or the Church of South India."

It is not principally in these official or semi-official acts, however, that we see the new attitude of the Anglicans, and here we may outline very quickly two significant statements.

The first appears in **Essays in Anglican Self-Criticism**, edited by David M. Paton, and published in 1958. This is a symposium examining Anglicanism from within. The 12th Essay **Anglicanism and Orthodoxy** is by the Reverend A. M. Alchin, formerly Philip Usher Scholar in Greece and near East, and at the time of writing Assistant Curate at St. Mary Abbot, Kensington, and on the Council of the Fellowship of St. Alban and St. Sergius. The second is the section: **The Lesson of Eastern Orthodoxy in The Recovery of Unity, A Theological Approach** by Edward L. Mascall, the Anglican Thomist well and affectionately known to a wide circle of Orthodox.

Both of these writers seem to have been stimulated by pamphlets by H. A. Hodgeson **Anglicanism and Orthodoxy**, (first published in 1955) and R. Chitty on **Orthodoxy and the Conversion of England**, in both of which the schism between East and West is said to have had a dogmatic rather than purely cultural or national

basis, and blame is squarely placed on the West. To oversimplify the thesis of Hodges is almost inevitable in brief generalizations, but both he and Chitty see the solution in a corporate return of Anglicanism to the Orthodox Church.

Allchin outlines some of the false steps in the early stages of Anglican Orthodox relations and assumes rather than restates the challenge implicit in Hodges. His conclusion deserves full presentation. Some claim, he says (p. 177), that Anglicanism has truly represented an "Orthodox synthesis, being both Catholic and Reformed, ordered and yet free, traditional and yet progressive. This would be a betrayal, he continues, because it proclaims a superficial "paper synthesis." "Anglicanism, as it stands, is not the answer to the world's problems, nor can it alone provide the reconciling factor in the reintegration of western Christendom." It has testified to the necessity for a "continuing dialectic between Catholic and Protestant and it has always turned to the tradition of the Fathers to find one vital element in the solution of its problem... The Anglican Communion has been finding its way forward to its true vocation which is to act as the nucleus of western Orthodoxy."

So far Allchin goes with Hodges and "It might be thought that the conclusion just reached would corporate reunion with the Orthodox Church. Such is not in fact the conclusion of this essay, nor of its writer." The reasons are from the Orthodox side: a) Political circumstances make it impossible for the Orthodox Church to act as a united body; b) The scarcity of Orthodox Theologians makes it difficult for the Orthodoxy to express "the fullness of the tradition by which it lives!" Evidently the author expects these "objections" to be taken seriously, but it is comforting to read on and discover that he finds the objections to seeking immediate unity to be "still more cogent" from the Anglican side. He begins, however, rather weakly by insisting that it must be the Anglican vocation to "stay in the West," apparently forgetting his own proposed "nucleus of Western Orthodoxy!" He then says the Anglican vocation is to maintain her position as a center for the discussion and conflict of Catholicism and Protestantism, particularly in view of the obligations imposed by geographical proximity to Presbyterian and Free Church brethren. What then of the challenge of Orthodoxy? Here Anglicans must increase personal contacts, offer practical aid, and avoid using "the Orthodox for diplomatic

ends," so Anglicanism may grow toward "Orthodox order, life and faith." Why this desirable end, and Allchin acknowledges that it is desirable, should be deferred is not made clear and convincing, although there is a certain nobility in the proposal that one's communion postpone integration in the Church until all of the dissenters are ready to take the same step.

Turning to Father Mascall we find him in reaction to the same two of his fellow Anglicans: Hodges and Chitty. It must be remembered that our discussion here is confined to some ten pages in a book of two hundred and forty on one general theme, and the limitations of such an approach are therefore obvious. Nor can a summary convey the delightful flavor of Mascall's essay, and reflect his barbed witticisms, as true as they are distasteful, on some of our Orthodox weaknesses.

Why is it necessary to attempt to "get behind" the Reformation and Middle Ages by historical research of dubious utility if one can find primitive Catholicism complete in Orthodoxy? This theme is most fully exposed by Hodges and Mascall quotes him extensively and finds them both agreed that the Anglican vocation lies in synthesizing the best of Catholicism and Protestantism. Father Mascall would part company at Hodges contention that Orthodoxy has preserved such a synthesis. He has known Orthodoxy for thirty years on various levels and feels that it has something to learn from the West, e. g. the revival of frequent lay communion is slower in the East than in the West. Hodges does not assume that either Byzantine or contemporary Orthodoxy are the norm, what then becomes of his claim that Anglicans must simply submit? Father Mascall asserts Orthodox theological dependence on Latin scholasticism, German Biblical Criticism, Boehme, Hegel and other western influences and contends that in view of these deviations it is reasonable to expect Orthodoxy to learn from the West, so the Anglican dialogue with Orthodoxy will involve the same mutual discovery of what is primitive and essential in both traditions and the eliminations of particular distortions in both.

There is much in both Allchin and Mascall that will not please an Orthodox reader, and while it is not the purpose of these notes to offer a kind of general refutation there is one issue that should be clarified. Both writers find a difficulty in the shortage of theologians in contemporary Orthodoxy, but even assuming that theologians of other confessions are incapable of understanding Ortho-

doxy without aid from within, what would this have to do with the claims of the Church unless one is ready to demand that one of the marks of the Church is the preservation of a certain cultural level? With a much shorter history than Orthodoxy in a friendlier environment the Anglican communion cannot point to an unbroken succession of theologians on a very high level. The accusation, which is partially justified by the facts, we must admit, would be serious if it could be demonstrated that Orthodoxy had not witnessed to the faith for some period, but one of the miracles of the Church is that it has never fallen on such a time. It may even have been a source of embarrassment to Anglicans at some times that there have always been quite enough competent Orthodox theologians to present the faith at Anglican Orthodox Conferences!

For our purposes the real question is what do these essays mean in terms of Anglican Orthodox relations? If they are, or become, representative it indicates that the time of romanticism and also exploitation, mutual let us admit, for political motives is past. This is pure gain insofar as false issues and influences are eliminated. The exoticism of west to east and east to west has always created a false perspective (here we may note that a vigorous western rite Orthodoxy would be a corrective) and may have attracted persons from both sides who sought to escape the dull familiarity of home in the colorful superficialities of strange rites and vocabularies. Allchin deplores the English use of Orthodoxy for political advantage and we may hope that the staffs of foreign ministries throughout the world will share his sentiments. If they do not it is still possible for churchmen to prove themselves dull instruments in unworthy hands, and a frank recognition of the possibilities is quite wholesome.

Secondly the essays show that Anglican thinkers of the first rank, themselves friends of Orthodoxy, see no easy answer in the Orthodox Church. They are analytical, critical and articulate without diplomatic euphemisms. This is perhaps the most positive development in our centuries of relations and certainly the only possible growing point. At the risk of sounding patronizing one might speculate about the Anglican theological maturity on which this new stand is taken, but whatever the reasons, one may rejoice at the results. National customs and externals are no longer preferred to the real differences which are theological or rather doctrinal.

Orthodox must understand that Anglicans, or more exactly the Anglican communion, are not about to be converted to Orthodoxy. When even Hodges and Chitty find it possible to remain outside of the Church we must strive to understand just what it is in Anglicanism that derives comfort from contradictions. This is the Orthodox task. However broad its defined limits, or far-reaching its branches, the Church of Anglicanism is ultimately the Anglican Church as it exists. From our side the negotiations have been in the hope that the Anglicans will discover that Orthodoxy is the Church, it is apparent that it is their hope that we discover that we are both parts of another body greater than either of us. Of course we cannot do this without betraying our tradition and, I believe, the best hopes of Anglicanism as well. There is greater candor between us today, but it is only in that spirit that the aspirations of both sides may be fulfilled.

William S. Schneirla



Three Chapters from an Unpublished Book

by Nicholas Arseniev

1. THE ATONEMENT

I.

The mystery of the Atonement is a continuous, lasting mystery. The Atonement lasts till now, it is permanent. It is historical and eternal. It has taken place once — at the central place of history — and it works continuously in the eternal self-offering of the Lamb standing before the Throne of the Father, “as if it were slain” in permanent intercession, as the seer has seen it in the Revelation (ch. 5). Pascal felt deeply this mystical reality when he said that Christ suffers continuously for us, we should not sleep whilst He is suffering. And Origen in his homilies on the Fourth Gospel commenting the words of the Baptist: “Look, there is the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world”, points to the fact that these words refer not only to a past happening, but also to the incessant act of a permanent taking away of sins: “Continuously does He achieve the taking away of the sins from every individual man that is in the world, until the sin is taken away from the whole world” (Commentary to John I, 37). There is a continuous mystery of Redemption working in the world. Once it has taken place historically — once for all, not to be repeated, in history — and it continues to work eternally: in the mystery of His permanent self-offering to the Father in intercession for us and in the mystery of our co-crucifixion with Him. The self-sacrifice, the self-surrender of the Son of God, being one and indivisible, presents accordingly two aspects: the historical fact, unique and decisive once for ever: “It is consummated!” (the last words of the Crucified, according to the Fourth Gospel), and the mystical continuous standing of the crucified and glorified Lord before the Throne of the Father in unceasing intercession.

II.

What is the sense of the Atonement? It is the revelation of boundless, conquering Divine Love, of boundless, most radical, most humble — so boundless that it cannot be sufficiently realized, sufficiently imagined and thought out — Divine Condescension. That is the essence of the Atonement. “God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son” (John 3, 16) “In this the love of God manifested itself, that God sent into the world His only-begotten Son in order that we might get life through Him”. “In this have we known the love, that He has laid down His life for us” (I John 4, 3 16). The whole mystery of salvation is in this boundless manifestation of Love: this boundless and conquering humility and self-surrender. There are two sides in this one stream of Redemption that has entered the world: the one is flowing manward, coming from God, and this is decisive, the other is directed Godwards, coming from man, but this flowing Godwards is also the work of God, being the obedient self-surrender of the Son of God, our Brother by blood and flesh, and the real Representative of Mankind. And both sides of the processus are one stream.

The meaning and basis of the Atonement is the Love of God. Only this is the inspiring and conquering force thereof, not any idea of juridical justification, of forensic litigation. All is taking place on a far deeper, far more substantial level — on the divine level, on the level of what God really is, essentially is: revealed in the boundless love of God and in the self-surrender of His Son.

This reality of the infinite loving condescension of God, creative and conquering, has been the basis and keystone, yea — the essence, the only and supreme contents of the whole Christian message, for all times and generations.

The Eastern Church sings in her hymns, overwhelmed by deepest admiration and wonder: “Thou, o Life, hast been put in the grave, o Christ, and the host of angels shuddered seeing Thy condescension”. “Thou camest upon Earth in order to save Adam, and not having found him there, Thou descendest even to Hell in search of him”. There is no measure and no reckoning in this condescension, it outpasses all computation. This is emphasized e. g. in the mystical experience of the English mystic Lady Julian of Norwich (XIV c): “If I could have suffered more” says Christ “I would have suffered more, But there could not be greater suffering!” And this

makes e. g. Francis of Assisi and the Fathers of the East speak of the boundlessness and inscrutable depth of the loving and humble condescension of God. "O humilitas sublimis, o sublimitas humilis;" exclaims Francis like Julian of Norwich; and seven centuries earlier, Isaac of Syria (VII cent) says in his Homilies: "God has delivered His Son to die on the Cross, because of His Love for the creature. If He had something more precious, He would have given it also in order to acquire mankind". The boundlessness of His condescension is stressed by Irenaeus of Lyon: „He has kindly poured Himself out, in order to gather us into the nest of the Father" (Book V, ch. 2, I), The summit of "His pouring Himself out", of His self-surrender is His agony in Gethsemane and on the Cross, and His words on the Cross and His death. "When He was left alone by His Father on the cross", "says Gregor of Nyssa," He represented then our situation. He is called and is really man in order to sanctify men by His person, having become as it were a leaven for the whole lump". Origen (Comm. to Psalm 21) dwells on the words: "My God, my God, wherefore hast Thou forsaken me?" "They point to the depth of His condescension, these words of Our Lord represent our suffering. We were left alone and rejected, but now we are again accepted and are saved by the suffering of Him who is beyond suffering, when He took upon Himself our sickness and our sin". And Gregory of Nazianze writes: "He complained together with us on the cross that God hast forsaken Him" (Homely on the Incarnation).

The Church in East, West, North and South has contemplated and adored this mystery of the outpouring of Divine Love, boundless and measureless, as already is had been contemplated by John the Divine: "In this love of God towards us revealed itself that God sent into the world His only-begotten Son in order that we might receive life through Him. Therein is love that not we love God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (I John 4, 9-10). And Christ Himself, according to the Fourth Gospel, had emphasized it in the Parable of the Good Shepherd: "I am the Good Shepherd, the Good Shepherd lays down his soul for his sheep... I, am the Good Shepherd, and I know those that are mine, and those that are mine know me... I lay down my life for the sheep. Therefore does the Father love me that I surrender it. I have the power to surrender it, and the power to take it again. This commandment I received from My Father".

The abysm is filled up through the initiative of God. Not we loved Him, but He loved us first. And bearer of this message, the witnesses of this fact are as it were "ambassadors" for Christ: as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead "be you reconciled to God" (2 Cor. 5, 20). God reconciles us to Himself by the act of supreme self-surrender. He so to say tries to win us by His love. There is the infinite dynamic activity of God filling up the chasm and winning us and inviting us to be reconciled with God.

For we have to be won and we must be reconciled with God in the most central and intimate recesses of our personality, and that leads us to the other side of the act of Atonement: pointing Godwards from man.

III.

We must be won, we have to be reconciled with God, the chasm has to be filled up not only from the divine side, through the measureless condensation: we must be taken hold of by the force of this condensation, and turn to God and surrender ourselves to Him and submit ourselves, to Him in perfect obedience. That is the other side in the fact and the processus of Redemption: not only the Son of God "poured Himself out" in infinite, condensing and conquering love, but we also we have to submit to God, to make our will submit to His in free and loving obedience. Can we do that? Can we attain this goal? The religious history of mankind on its summits is an attempt of heroically-minded men to surrender themselves to the will of God. We find this desire stated e. g. in many Indian and Mahomedan mystical texts, so in the "Bhagavat Gita", in the words, of Krishna to Arjuna: "All what thou doest what thou eatest, what thou offerest in sacrifice, what thou layest upon thyself as an ascetic exercise — all that, o son of Kunti, make to a gift to Me." "Among all the yogins the man who surrenders to Me his innermost self and with faith adores Me, is the nearest to Me". And the modern Indian mystic Tagore writes in one of his poems: "Let only the smallest thing remain from me, that I might say: Thou art all". And we have wonderful examples of such obedient self-surrender to God among Mahomedan saints and mystics.

But from the Christian point of view there rises an objection: no such total surrender is possible to man. It is only an idea, a

glimpse, a nostalgia that haunts the thoughts and feelings of those mystics, those leading representatives of mankind in its aspirations and its travelling and yearning and tending Godwards. There is always a remainder of selfishness, of self-concentartion, self-admiration sticking to man's heart, even in his utter self-emptying, self-surrender. There remains always the feeling: "I have surrendered my will to God". And so no real self-surrender, total obedience has taken place really through all those endeavors, although this free obedience, this free surrender of one's will to God is the pivot of world's religious and moral history. But it could not be achieved. It was self-delusion, when men thought they had or they could achieve that. The Christian believes that it has been achieved once: in the total obedience of the Son of God who "has become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Philip. 2. 8). Being really fully man in the full possession of all the distinctive features of humanity, except sin, he could represent mankind in its way Godwards.

IV.

The Atonement works in us. What has been achieved by Christ is not only a representative act, a mystical symbol, it is much more than that: it transforms in a most essential and basic way our internal life, our relation with God, yes, all our situation in the world, the destiny of all our personality, soul and body, and the destiny of the whole Cosmos. But let us return to our spiritual life. We have to become obedient in Christ. That is the sense of the Atonement for us. He has become obedient to the Father as true representative of the human race as true "High-Priest" (according to the image, much used by the Church-Fathers e. g. by Gregory of Nyssa). But — and not symbolically only — in Him we also become obedient: by sharing His Cross. Only so can the Redemption, wrought by the Son of God who was also really Son of Man, work in us. That makes the Cross to be the pivot of all our interior life, the presupposition and also the way of our salvation. If we do not share His cross, we are not partakers of His Life Eternal. We have received *gratis*, without any merit on our side, as the great gift, the great boon, to share His obedience, to become obedient through Him and in Him. This is not passive or mechanical, we are led by obedience to become ourselves actively and consciously obedient to the Heavenly Father, to become active

and conscious sharers of His Son's Cross. This makes the doctrine of the co-crucifixion with Christ central in the theaching of St. Paul, central in the Christian life and Christian outlook. And here we approach also the mystery of Suffering, of the redeeming quality of Suffering. Not our suffering is redeeming: His suffering is redeeming as of the unblemished, immaculate, the voluntary self-delivering Victim, but our suffering received — we shall return to this subject — a redeeming quality, if merged in His suffering, if uplifted by His suffering (sec. Coloss 1, 24), if having become a part of His eternal sacrifice, offering His will in obedience to His Father on the "glorious" and "life-giving" Cross, reconciling the Heavenly and the Earthly.

V.

"It pleased the Father" writes Paul to the Colossians, "that in Him should dwell all the plenitude; and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself; through Him, I say, whether they be things on Earth or things in Heaven" (I, 19-21). Here, as in other analogous utterings of St. Paul, vistas are opening into the cosmical significance of the Atonement, outpassing by far its purely human implication. In the Atonement is given the begin of the return of the whole fallen creature, fallen through disobedience of Man to God. The act of the return has been started by the perfect obedience of the "Second Adam", the new Head of the redeemed humanity, the Son of God who became Son of Man. The victory has been already won and sealed by the blood of the Lamb of God. Now it has to become manifested, it has to be realized more and more, until it permeates the whole bulk of creation.

2. THE HUMILITY OF GOD.

1.

The idea of the humility of God seems strange. It is nevertheless true. It is one of the greatest truths that dawn upon us when we consider the Universe and Man in their history; I mean, when we consider them from a Christian viewpoint. Then this truth reveals itself in its unutterable grandeur, more than that: it can take hold of us with sudden overwhelming poignancy, in which the sense of trembling reverence and wonder and loving adoration are blended into one.

The humility of God discloses itself already in the act of Creation. He has willed that there should be life "and life in abundance". It did not diminish His glory and splendour, it enhanced His glory and splendour, but He wanted that somethings should exist "outside" of Him, as something separated from Him and yet deeply united with Him, as something "independent", although at the same time it was and remained in deepest dependence of Him. He voluntarily restricted His might, His power in admitting a thing beside Him, utterly dependent on Him, but still having its own individually, its own physiognomy, received from God, but still its own.

That is Creation. The Creation does not limit the omnipotence of the Creator — on the contrary, it is the most eloquent proof thereof —, but it makes that something exists beside God, which is not God. And therein the Greatness and Glory of God reveal themselves with special splendour, but also the Humility of God. For this is Self-restriction, loving Self-restriction. It is Love. For Love is humble and creative and restricts itself, "forgets" itself and promotes the welfare of the beloved. The Son of Man who was Son of God, said of Himself: "I came in order that they should have life and have it in abundance". The same words could be inscribed over the whole act of creation. The idea of the self-communicating, outflowing Love — creative and resplendent in its outgoing "humility" and in its majesty and power (the "humility" being one of the most characteristical and fundamental aspects of its majesty and glory and power) — this idea of the outgoing, outflowing creative Love is admirably expressed by Dante in his "Paradiso":

"Non per aver a se di bon aquisto
Che esser non puo, ma perche il suo splendore
Potesse risplendente, dir: subsisto,
— In sua Eternita, di tempo fuore,
Fuor di tutto comprender, come lui piacque,
S'aperse in nuovi amori l'Eterno Amore".

The Eternal Love willed that other individual love-centers should exist beside it and share its bliss. That is according to Dante the meaning of Creation.

This is the "Humility" of God, but this Humility is also the enhanced manifestation of His Glory. For the Glory of God resplends in His works and in His creation.

2.

The guidance of Humanity through the different stages of its history is also on act of the condescension of God, of God's loving humility. He did not leave quite alone, has not quite forsaken those poor blundering men, those tribes and nations and races. So often has been His image misrepresented and distorted, but still He has been continually looked for and searched for and sometimes there came a distant hint, a dark inkling of His real being, for again and again He was vouchsafing some glimpses of Himself to searching hearts amidst the dark clouds of human ignorance and superstitions, human passions, and human corruption and bestiality. Sometimes He has been even dimly felt and hinted at as the Condescending one. So in old China we have the marvelous mystical intuition of Lao-Tse about the boundless humility of the Absolute Principle of all Life and Being — the Supreme Tao ("The Way").

"Tao is all-pervading, and its age is inexhaustible! Fathomless! It is like the fountain — head of all things...

From Him all things take their rise, but He does not turn away from them;
He gives them life, but does not take possession of them;
He acts, but does not appropriate;
Accomplishes, but claims no credit..."

And again:

"The Great Tao flows everywhere...
The myriad things derive their life from it,
And it does not deny them...
It clothes and feeds the myriad things,
Yet does not claim them as its own...
Being the home of all things, yet claiming not,
It must be considered great:
Because to the end it does not claim greatness,
Its greatness is achieved..."

And therefore the author exclaims again and again in marvel and amazement: "O how marvellous and silent! O how unfathomable!"

This is a deep and beautiful glimpse of the Divine Reality, but it remains a general statement, vague, impersonal and abstract, it lacks the poignancy of a definite Personality, of an historical fact. For amidst the brittle frame of history, in a concrete fact of

historical human existence, have taken place decisions of universal, yea cosmic scope, solutions of a final, of a decisive, victorious and triumphant character, decisions that were at the same time historical events. There is therefore a character of poignancy, of uniqueness, of moral directness in this Christian message that addresses you in a personal way, that appeals to you as to a living individual person, because a concrete living Person, our brother according to the flesh and blood and our sharer in moral struggle and effort and moral heroism, is the bearer of this message, of this Truth — the Condescension of God — or rather is, the embodiment of this Condescension: the Divine word that became man, God that has become our Brother. The humility is thus far more striking and much more far-reaching and radical, because it is the expression not of a pantheistic creed in which God and the whole of the Universe essentially coincide, but the manifestation of a living personal God, holy and unattainable to creature, Creator and Master of all things that willingly, out of His own loving initiative became creature, in order to come near to us and to have us as His own, as His friends and brothers, and take hold of us, and to move our hearts, and to transfigure us, and to redeem us. Thus the "humility" of God is only another term for something greater than all things — the condescending Love of God.

3.

The Christ of the Gospels is humble. That is the mark under which He enters history. It is the all-pervading mark. In the 12th chapter of the Gospel according to St. Matthew the words of Isaiah are referred to Him, thus characterizing His personality: "Behold My Servant whom I have chosen, My Beloved, in whom My soul is well pleased... He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets. A bruised reed shall He not break, and a smoking flax shall He not quench..."

The manger, the homeless life of travel, teaching and service, interwoven with persecutions which He underwent from the hand of His enemies, His arrest, trial, passion, crucifixion and death — all this is, well known, one great revelation of deepest humility and self-sacrificing love. But mark, how this humility, this meekness ("Learn from Me, for I am meek and humble of heart") is at the same time permeated by the touch of Majesty. A supreme Presence is given in this meekness and humility.

It is a royal humility, the meekness of majesty, it is the humility of God. How this all-permeating touch of a Supreme Presence runs e. g. through all those words: "Come unto Me all you that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me: for I am meek and humble in heart, and you shall find rest unto your souls". The redeeming, peace-giving, restoring and healing Presence, this Center and Fulfillment, the Presence of One who is greater than Sabbath, greater than Salomon, before Whom the man morn blind, now healed, falls down, and "worships Him", Wrose coming into the house of Zakkhaeus is a decisive turning point in the life of this sinful man, Whose word moves and strikes the hearts and sets them afire, Who has the power to pardon sins, but also to heal and to raise from the bed of sickness, — this Presence that is felt by John the Baptist as of One, before whom he has totally to eclipse himself, not worthy even "to stoop down and to unlose the latches of His shoes", — this Presence, I say, is not only clad and hidden in humility, but His humility is the most appropriate, the most adequate revelation of the greatness of this Presence, the unutterable, boundless Greatness of God being revealed in his unutterable, boundless humility. That is the centre of St. Paul's preaching: He has humbled Himself becoming obedient unto death (Philip. 2).

This is the vision that made Francis of Assisi, who contemplated it incessantly with the eye of burning love, to exclaim (referring to the Eucharist): "O sublimitas humilis! O humilitas sublimis!" This is the vision from which e. g. the Eastern Orthodox Church cannot detach its gaze in trembling thankfulness, in love and awe-stricken admiration. The two poles are contemplated simultaneously, as both they are simultaneously given in the Incarnate Son of God — the suffering Humanity and the fulness of God.

"In an indescribable manner God unites Himself with man... the earthly reaches to heaven, the world is freed from the ancient curse, creation exults with joy". (Annunciation hymn).

"Heaven and earth are made one today in the Birth of Christ. Today God has descended upon the earth, and man has ascended to the heaven".

"Thou hast become poor like us, and hast deified the earthly by Thy union with it". (Christmas hymns).

And this are the contemplative hymns of the Holy week:

"Today there hangs on the Cross He who has suspended the earth on the waters. With a crown of thorns is being crowned the King of Angels. With a mock-purple is clad He that clothes the sky with clouds: is struck in the face He that freed Adam in the Jordan. To the Cross is nailed the Bridegroom of the Church. With a lance is pierced the Son of the Virgin. We worship Thy sufferings, o Christ! We worship Thy sufferings, o Christ! We worship Thy sufferings, o Christ! Show us also Thy glorious resurrection.

"To-day there stands before Pilate the Lord of the Creation; on the Cross is hung the Author of the Universe; He was brought to it like a willing lamb. With nails is He fastened and is pierced through the side. He that made manna rain down, is given to drink with a sponge. The Saviour of the World is struck in the face, the Shaper of the Universe is insulted by His servants. Oh, the Lord's love to mankind! For those who nailed Him to the Cross, He prayed to His Father".

"O Life, how canst Thou die? How canst Thou dwell in the grave? But Thou destroyest the dominion of death and raisest the dead from the depths of hell".

"We glorify Thee, o King Jesus, and we worship Thy burial and Thy passion, whereby Thou hast redeemed us from corruption".

"Thou that didst settle the measure of the earth, dwellest to-day in a narrow grave, o Jesus, King of All, that raisest the dead from the graves".

"O Jesus, my Christ. Lord of All, seeking what, didst Thou descend to those who are in hell? Was it the redemption of mankind?"

"The Master of Universe is seen as dead, and into a new tomb is laid He that has emptied the graves of their dead".

"O Life, Thou hast descended into the grave, o Christ, and through Thy death hast Thou destroyed death, and life hast Thou made to stream forth for all the world".

Majesty in Humility! Life Eternal in Death and overcoming Death! A great Orthodox teacher of spiritual life St. Philotheus of Sinai writes accordingly "All the saints clothed themselves with this supreme holy garment of God' — humility (ch. 13, "Dobrotolubiye" in Russian, Vol. II. 2nd edition, 1900, p. 406).

We are in a world that bewilders us, that always has bewildered man. We feel ourselves helpless, lost in the world's immen-

sity, crushed by the natural course of happenings, baffled and disappointed. How to account for all the tragical side of man's life encountering us, so to say, at every step, lurking from every corner, from every issue of the usual morning-paper, with its catastrophes, burning airplanes, railroad accidents, explosions in mines, inundations, war casualties? And what of our personal life drifting imperceptibly into the great chasm that is the end and limit of our life here? And what of this perpetual flow of changes, the ever-flowing, incessant, untiring stream of decay, of mutability, of passing away? And of the Silence of the immense expanses giving no answer, void of a response to our anguish, to our appeal, to our challenge, and seeming to be void of a higher Presence? "Le silence de ces espaces infinis m'effraie", said Pascal. What is the meaning of this silent, crushing, implacable and unresponsive Universe, of its life and decay and passing away, crumbling to pieces and rebirth in the millions and billions of Astronomical years? What is the bearing, the intimate hidden sense of this universe, its life, its laws, its structure, its silence, its cold magnificence, and the step of Death marching through it? What is the sense of our passing joys and sorrows, lives and death? Is there not in this whirlwind of deaths and lives, soon to be forgotten, to leave no trace behind them, a strain of deep vanity of all things, a taste of unredeemed unutterable bitterness and disappointment? Nothing could be said against this presentation of the world's life and personal existence and the utter senselessness or the awfulness of every life and every existence, if there had not been a decisive and exhaustive revelation of the world's "Background", of the secret sources of Eternal Life, eternal production, eternal reality behind the structure of this world. This revelation of the secret "springs" of all life, all reality — and also of the sense of life, for life has got a sense — was the active, condescending, self-disclosure of the Love of God. God revealed Himself in "the Son of His Love." There is no void — all is full of His nearness. Even in sufferings, in death, in utter dereliction He is near, He is there — having descended Himself into the abyss of suffering and death and of love, His love having brought Him to do so. "This is love; that not we loved God, but that God loved us and gave His Son as the propitiation for our sins" (I John, 4, 10).

There is a sense, aim, a plan in the mystery of the world. The revelation of God in His Incarnate Son, as condescending,

creating and restoring Love is the nerve of the world's life, the hidden mystery of all being and becoming, transfiguring life even in the deepest abysses of our and the world's existence.

3. THE LAW OF LOVE.

1

The supreme law is the law if love. Even God was subjugated by the power of love, even God could not escape the power of love — say Christian mystical writers and Saints of different countries and centuries. But this language, impressive and beautiful though it be, is not quite adequate. The power of love is God's being itself, it is the innermost mystery, the innermost nerve, the spring and the goal of the life of the world. It is not a sudden rush, a sudden movement — it is the innermost law and foundation of existence, as far as it is in God. But we and the world can fall outside of God, and this did happen and our vision became thus obscured, and other spiritual forces began to rule over us and over the fallen world, forces of destruction, of hatred, of blind, egotistical self-affirmation, which means degradation, of injustice, of untruth, of suffering, of instability, of death. Our life is subjected to them, so is the life of our world. But these are not the ultimate depths of life: in its ultimate depths the creation listens to the word of God and yearns for redemption and knocks at the doors of Mercy. In these depths of life there is a dialogue between the life-giving and redeeming God and Creation. And history is the fulfilment of the plan of the merciful God, His plan of redemption, of salvation, of reintegration of all things, His "household-plan", the vision of which has so deeply impressed and conquered the mind of Paul. So the moving spring of History, in spite of all its troubles and catastrophes, is the guiding and reintegrating and educating and redeeming love of God.

The medieval seer, Lady Julian of Norwich, thus formulates the meaning of all she had seen, of all that had been revealed to her, the sense of world's being and world's history:

"Wouldst thou learn thy Lord's meaning in this thing? Learn it well: Love was His meaning. — Who showed it thee? — Love. — What showed He the! — Love. — Wherefore showed it He? — For Love".

Let us throw a short and reverential glance, a glance full of deepest humility and trembling adoration, at the Mystery of God Himself, God as the outflowing power of Love, who is Love Himself in His innermost life, independently of the world and its being. In the "High-Priest's prayer" of Christ we have glimpses of this Reality. The depths of the relations between Father and Son, and Son and Father, is love: "That they all be one; as Thou, Father, are in Me, and I am in Thee, so let them be one in Us..."

"I in Thee, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me".

"Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory which Thou hast given Me: for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world..."

" And I have declared unto them Thy name.... that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me, be in them, and I in them".
(John 17, 21, 23, 24, 26).

"For Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world" — a permanent revelation of love, of an eternity of love. He has given us glory and grace "in the Beloved One"; He has led us into the Kingdom of the Son of His Love", says Paul (Ephes. 1, 6; Coloss. 1, 13). The Kingdom of the Son of His Love, the love before the foundation of the world — all that points to a relation beyond and before all our possible experience: to the depths of Divine Life. In these depths of His eternal life God is loving — before the foundation of the world — and the eternal object of His love is the "Son of His Love". This comes before all. That is why John can say: "God is Love" — Love by Himself, in Himself, not only in relation to us. And that is the religious, the essential significance of our faith in the Blessed Trinity: God is a Living God, a God that loves, His own internal life is Love. And the Spirit of God is the Spirit of Love.

And this Love has revealed itself, and this Love wants us to love Him back, and this Love will vanquish. So the beginning is Love and the end is Love. And in the centre stands His self-revelation in love and humility: the Cross of the Son of God. And our new life is love, only love, the all-transcending power of love. The goal of this new life is "to know the love of Christ that passes

all knowledge”, to be carried away by the love of Christ (“the love of Christ takes hold of us”), to vanquish all obstacles, even tortures and death, in this love of Christ: “we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us”, for nothing, “neither death, nor life... nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord”.

That is a new rythmus of life, a new law of life — this love that “covers all, believes all, hopes all, endures all”, that makes to forgive the enemy, to pray for the enemy, that stretches itself forward in kindness, condescension and pardon towards one’s enemy. Impossible to put this down in strict rules, that is a new conquering force, a new life, a new law of life, a new inspiration. “Hereby we perceive the love that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren” (I John 3, 16).

Augustin was right when instead of formulating external rules of moral conduct he made this bold enunciation: “Dilige et fac quod vis” (“Love, and do what you like”). He was really stating hereby the inner sense of the whole moral teaching of the Gospel.

But it is more than a moral teaching, it is a new force — the stream of divine Love connecting Heaven and Earth and giving a sense, a direction to our lives still here on earth. This love is also a faith and a certainty. “And we have known the love that God has to us and believed in it. God is love, and who dwelleth in love, he dwelleth in God, and God in him” (I John 4, 16).

That is the law of the new life, beginning already now, based on the revelation of His condescending love and stretching forward. More than that: it is the supreme Law of Life Eternal.

Nicholas Arseniev



Notes and Comments

THE BISHOP'S CONFERENCE

On March 15th, the Greek Archdiocese was host to a Conference of American Orthodox hierarchs unprecedented in the history of the Church in America. A Federation of the jurisdictions which maintained communion with the historic Patriarchates was given legal existence during World War II, but it was generally ineffective because it did not fully represent Orthodoxy in the United States, where large and active jurisdictions have no direct ties abroad. Various other meetings of hierarchs have occurred from time to time but nothing so comprehensive has been attempted in the past.

Since standard directories and reference works provide complete catalogues of the American jurisdictions the composition of the Conference is evident from the short list of the absentees: the Russian jurisdictions of Moscow and the Synod Abroad (Metropolitan Anastassy), the Autocephalous Ukrainian Church (Metropolitan John Theodorovich), the Romanian Episcopate (Bishop Valerian Trifa), and the Albanian Church of Bishop Fan Noli.

The invitations to the Conference were issued by Archbishop Iakovos of the Greek Archdiocese and none were sent to the Ukrainian Church (listed above) and the Romanian which derived its succession from it, on the well-known grounds that the Ukrainian succession is still ambiguous. The Patriarchal Russian Church was not clear about the nature of the invitation, and Metropolitan Anastassy declined to attend. Bishop Noli has always had strained relations with the Oecumenical Patriarchate which invited the American Albanian Bishop under its jurisdiction to the Conference.

The situation of the absentees was thoughtfully considered by the hierarchs attending, and measures were taken looking toward their inclusion in future conference. If the selective principle (valid Apostolic succession and continuity with a historical mission) remains constant, all difficulty regarding the Romanian jurisdiction of Bishop Valerian has now been removed by his reordination by bishops of Metropolitan Leonty's jurisdiction. This act, which simply supplied possible deficiencies in the Ukrainian succession, was a step toward regularizing the American situation, and required great courage and generosity on both sides. If the action is met with vision and love by the other hierarchs not only has one enormous hurdle to full cooperation been cleared, but the whole prospect of union will have been immeasurably advanced.

The legislation of the early Church was never clear or consistent on the distinction between validity and canonicity, or regularity, and the historical accident of the Papal Schism deprived the Church of the development which

ensued in the West. In general Orthodoxy has been unnecessarily complacent in the face of local disruptions of communion which are assumed to be temporary so long as heresy does not intrude. This is the exact opposite, by way of illustration, of the Anglican tolerance of almost any deformations of faith if communion is not broken. So American Orthodoxy has not felt the full pain of those purely jurisdictional divisions in the United States which are based on racial or political differences.

The Conference was amiably presided over by Archbishop Iakovos and dealt with the real issues of unity and cooperation in a forthright fashion in the spirit of Christian harmony.

The possible revival of the Federation on a wider basis was raised and dismissed, but there was unanimously concurrence on the ideal of closer cooperation and the hierarchs agreed that a standing conference of jurisdictional heads, with subsidiary committees for important fields, is most necessary. To suggest the structure of the new conference and clarify related problems the bishops appointed a committee of theologians to report to a second meeting set for June 7th. Friends of St. Vladimir's will be interested to learn that three of the four theologians are members of the Seminary faculty: Archimandrite Firmilian Ocokoljich, Archpriest Alexander Schmemann, and Father William Schneirla. The fourth member is Father Constantine Kazanas, Dean of the Greek Cathedral in New York.

The Conference was a beginning and dealt in generalities, but the spirit in which it met and worked speaks for a future in which the American Church will develop that internal unity and administrative coordination essential to fruitful survival.

William S. Schneirla



ORTHODOXY AND ECUMENISM

The recent history of Orthodox participation in the Ecumenical Movement has made perfectly clear the need for a more synchronized and coherent stand by all the local Orthodox Churches in the field of Ecumenical relations. The unusual and solemn journey of His All-Holiness Athenagoras I through the Middle East, the visit of members of the Holy Synod of Constantinople to Athens, the travels of the Serbian Patriarch German in Jerusalem and Istanbul and other less spectacular contacts between various Orthodox Church authorities are signs of a general concern of the Hierarchy to prepare thoroughly and responsibly for the coming Pan-Orthodox Conference to be held in Rhodes next Summer. There is therefore some ground for the general hope that the Orthodox Church will solve its inner contradictions and misunderstandings, which have unfortunately weakened Her witness on the Ecumenical scene until the present day.

According to our opinion, the most harmful of these misunderstandings (present both in Orthodox and non-Orthodox minds) are the following: (1) In spite of all the official statements concerning this point, some still believe that the participation of the Orthodox Church in the World Council of

Churches implies a modification of her ecclesiology and a recognition on the part of the Orthodox that Christian unity is not **already** present in the Orthodox Church, as a gift of God, but that it is to be sought outside of Her and that She does not demand now the **return** of all Christians to the Faith of the Apostles and Fathers as the **only** means for achieving true unity.

(2) Some speak of what they call "Unity without Union," implying mainly by "unity" practical collaboration among separated Christians, condemnation of proselytism, and a common stand in social and political matters. This position seems to overlook the fact that the "unity" of which the New Testament speaks is first of all a union with God, and that the true aim of ecumenism is to fulfill the will of God and to accept His gift of unity. The partial recognition of this spiritual and theological fact has already led the Ecumenical Movement from "Life and Work" to "Faith and Order," which was undoubtedly an indication of real progress. A movement back to "Life and Work" would mean a victory of the most liberal and unorthodox kind of Protestantism and would ultimately make much more difficult any further step toward true unity in Faith, which would have become a "secondary matter," at the very start. What Christians really need is organic unity in the holy Church of God, and our mission, as Orthodox, is to show to all what this Church really is.

It is not by human pride, for which the present historical situation of Orthodoxy gives little ground, that the Orthodox Church may claim to possess the true Christian Faith, but on the basis of an interpretation of the Gospel different from that of the Western Reformation. Her claim is neither a denial of brotherly love, nor an escape from a frank doctrinal discussion. On the contrary, it implies responsibility of witnessing and readiness to discuss always and unconditionally with anybody any matter of faith or practice. If the Orthodox Church is ready to take part, wholeheartedly, on these grounds, in the World Council of Churches and in any contact with our Roman Catholic brothers, its witness will undoubtedly have a tremendous impact on the ecumenical discussion. If no decisive and unanimous conviction in favour of this policy can be achieved, total abstention would probably become preferable.

John Meyendorff



In Memoriam

Archimandrite Cyprian Kern
1900-1960

On February 10 the Lord called to Him Father Cyprian Kern, Professor of Patristics at St. Sergius Theological Institute in Paris. Son of a Russian scientist, he was born in 1900 and received his education at the famous Alexander Lyceum in St. Petersburg. Leaving Russia after Revolution he graduated from the Faculty of Theology in Belgrade, took his monastic vows and in 1927 began teaching at the Seminary of Bitolje. In 1928 Metropolitan Antony Khrapovitsky made him Archimandrite and appointed head of the Russian Mission in Jerusalem. In 1937 he joined the faculty of St. Sergius, first as Professor of Liturgics, and then since 1940 as Professor of Patristics. His major works are: "Flowers of Prayer (Essays in Liturgical Theology) (1928), Archimandrite Antonine Kapoustine, Head of the Russian Mission in Jerusalem (1936), The Eucharist (1947), Anthropology of St. Gregory Palamas (1950), Orthodox Pastoral Ministry (1957). In the last years he organized and inspired the "St. Sergius Liturgical Conferences", which became very popular among the leading Christian liturgiologists.

Father Cyprian was an excellent lecturer, a genuine Christian scholar. To this writer, as well as to a whole generation of St. Sergius students, he was also a dear personal friend. He gave much to us, but of a special, of an eternal significance will remain his deeply inspiring lectures in Liturgics, the way he led us to the understanding of the Eucharist. His death is a great loss for Orthodox theology.

Alexander Schmemann.



Book Reviews

A. Kartashov. STUDIES IN THE HISTORY OF THE RUSSIAN CHURCH.
Paris. 1960. YMCA-Press. Vol. I — pp. 686; vol. II — pp. 569. In Russian.

A monumental work. A fruit of a life-long study, of great knowledge, of devoted scholarship. There is a burning, an emotional quality in this vast learning, showing us from time to time glimpses of the man Kartashov behind the immense stores of accumulated historical knowledge. He is deeply interested in the influence of the Church and of the preaching of the Gospel

not only upon individual persons, but upon the totality of a nation and its historical destinies. This is the chief inspiration permeating this book. So in closing the section dedicated to the Church in Kievan Russia, the Author speaks of the immense educative power which this Church exercised upon the moral development of the Russian people, its culture and public life (vol. I, p. 252). He admires especially the total change in St. Vladimir's personality after His conversion, and the great works of social help to the needy, the sick and aged ones which he undertook on a large scale during the rest of his reign. Kartashov is a scholar of sharp critical mind and does not want to rely only on pious legends, his admiring praise is substantiated and founded in this case as in other cases by his critical acumen and his sound historical knowledge. He knows only too well all the dark sides of Russian history, also of Russian Church history, and e. g. the great disaster which struck Russia in the beginning of the 17th century — in the time of the Great "Smoota", the darksome and ferocious years of the terrible Civil War. The greater therefore is the thrill of admiring emotion with which he depicts the decisive role played by Patriarch Hermogen and the monks of the St. Sergius Monastery in those years of terror and moral chaos; the work and the personalities of Hermogen and the leading men of the Sergius Laura formed the spiritual basis, the spiritual backbone for the moral and political recovery of the Russian people. One could say — and this is perhaps a kind of objection or criticism against this great scholar's manner to write Church history — that comparatively too much attention is paid to the political and social aspect of the life of the Russian Church. These aspects are of course very important, but less important, I think, than the life of sanctity, the transfiguration of the human personality by the power of Grace which faces us in the life of the Saints, and the influence of this example and the influence of holiness on the rank and file of the faithful. And yet to this most important side of the life of the Church, to this greatest gift given to mankind in the Church — the Saints — the author pays comparatively little attention. He speaks of course with greatest admiration of the marvelous transfiguration operated in St. Vladimir by his conversion and of the great role played on the life of Kievan Russia by the famous Cave-Monastery of Kiev, but neither does he dwell on the wonderful personality of St. Sergius nor on the immense importance for Russian religious history of the innumerable representatives of Northern Monasticism, the anachorites and monks of the North-Russian forest regions.

We have the impression a little that the religious point of view is sometimes subordinated to considerations of a national and political interest. So the attitude to the Church reform of Peter the Great is not quite free from contradictions (and the chief shaper of the Church-reform, the ruthless and terrible Feofan Prokopovic whose unchristian and immoral outlook and personality are sufficiently outlined by the author himself, is nevertheless twice — it means emphatically — called by him "the Great").

But what a mine of richest, critically sifted information! And this blending of acute criticism with moral pathos and warm appreciation for the great figures of Church history, how attractive and convincing it often is! And

how vivid and full of details and many-sided and objective is the presentation e. g. of the beginning of the Russian schism ("raskol") of the 17th century!

This work is very important. It fills a gap, it is very instructive. It is written by a scholar of mighty critical insight and a man to whom the destiny of the Christian Church, the destiny of his natal Russian Church and the religious and moral destiny of the Russian people are of deepest concern and therefore there is a certain internal tension in his narrative. We do not always follow him, but we do so often feel indebted to him to his store of knowledge, to his critical powers, to the warmth of his heart. Some parts are written in a more external way (the early history of the see of Moscow), but never do they lack interest.

Being so deeply indebted to the Author, the thing which we most warmly desire is that the third and final volume (embracing the history of the Russian Church 1801 to 1917), perhaps the most important of all three, should follow as soon as possible the published first and second volumes. I have heard that the third volume is nearly written, but that there are financial difficulties to publish so large a book (each volume comprises 600-700 printed pages). We must therefore intensively desire that this third volume should follow as quickly as possible and that means should be found for this aim. And now once more let us tell the Author, how thankful we are to him!

Nicholas Arseniev



The Very Rev. Archimandrite Elias Mastoyiannopoulos. **NOSTALGIA FOR ORTHODOXY.** Athens, Greece: "Zoe" Brotherhood of Theologians, 1959.
Translated into English. 208 pages.

For the last thirty or forty years, since the end of the First World War, several important books and many essays have been written by Roman Catholics, Anglicans, and Protestant theologians and scholars about the Eastern Church. Father Mastoyiannopoulos must be congratulated for bringing their works to the attention of wider circles of Orthodox believers. Any one who must draw up a bibliography on the Eastern Church will be greatly helped by the references in this book. The author summarizes the most important of these contributions. Unfortunately his presentation is onesided in a way that is indicated by the title of the book. He presents only the praise of the Orthodox Church which may be found in English, French, and German scholarly works. Only these passages which are favorable or admiring are given. This method of selection is rather dangerous, for a book which "praises" the Orthodox Church, also may contain passages which criticize it. It might be very stimulating and instructive, in the opinion of this reviewer, if criticism were combined with appreciation. For example, Ernst Benz, in **Geist und Leben der Ostkirche**, a book which is quoted in **Nostalgia for Orthodoxy**, devotes a chapter to the greatness and weakness of Orthodoxy. Among the weaknesses he mentions the strong nationalistic feelings in the Eastern Church.

Although nationalism as phyletism has been branded as a heresy, still obscures the vision of the Catholic for many Orthodox. **Nostalgia for Orthodoxy** ends with an important chapter, "A Tremendous Obligation" (Epilogue). The appreciation of the Eastern Church by others is a challenge for every conscientious member of the Church. "They must not forget what a priceless possession has been entrusted to them... But, in order to love and gain the full benefit and blessings from Orthodoxy, we must first take the time to study its message" (pp. 205-206). At this time, when the Eastern Church has begun to emerge from its isolation and to establish significant and fruitful contacts with the West, this invitation to study must be regarded as "a tremendous obligation."

Veselin Kesich



Darwell Stone and F. W. Puller. WHO ARE MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH?

Originally published as Pusey House Occasional Paper No. 9, 1921,
reprinted in 1959 by American Church Publications. 94 pp.

This is "a statement of evidence" written by two wellknown Patristic scholars "in criticism of a sentence in the appeal to all Christian people made by the Lambeth Conference of 1920..." The particular sentence of the appeal which is criticized in this impressively documented essay runs as follows: "We acknowledge all those who believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, and have been baptized in the name of the Holy Trinity, sharing with us membership in the universal Church of Christ which is His Body." The Lambeth Conference of 1958 also issued a pronouncement which was substantially similar to this earlier statement.

The particular question which Stone and Puller deal with is, "Who are members of the Church Militant?" or "Who are the members of the visible Church which is the Body of Christ on earth?" (pp. 1 9-10). Their problem is not "to what extent God in His mercy may bestow sanctifying gifts on persons living in all good faith outside the Church and striving to serve Him" (p. 9). The authors stress that "God in His love has provided certain covenantal channels of grace and a covenanted sphere of grace. Those who know about these covenantal provisions and are within reach of them are bound to use them. But God Himself is not bound" (p. 9).

The authors point out two main shortcomings of the Lambeth appeal in terms of the Church Militant. First, on the basis of the New Testament teaching, the authors argue, that baptism, even performed within the Church, "does not ensure perpetuity of Church-membership to professing Christians." It would be in contradiction to the New Testament teaching of the Church to maintain "that those who have been separated from it, or have separated themselves from it, are nevertheless still members of the Church" (p. 14). This view is amply supported by evidence from the Fathers.

Secondly, those persons who have been baptized as adults in schismatic bodies are regarded by the Fathers as external to the church, even though

the baptism may be valid. Augustine, who "of all the Fathers... was, perhaps, the one who was most desirous of making all allowances that could possibly be made without disloyalty to revealed truth" (p. 20) defended the validity of baptism in schismatic bodies: Nevertheless he makes it perfectly clear "that those so baptized were not members of the Church until they were reconciled" (p. 21). The authors conclude, upon the evidence of the Western Fathers of the undivided Church, that groups or individuals which are separated from the church are considered outside the Body of Christ on earth.

In this essay the Western Fathers are quoted almost exclusively. The reason is a very simple one, that "all representative Anglican theologians accept the Western view of the validity of heretical Baptism and the Augustinian view of the validity of heretical Orders" (p. 23, f. n. 1). In the authors' mind, there is no doubt that their conclusion may be supported by numerous references to the Eastern Fathers. They mention only one, as "a representative Eastern passage," St. Basil, Ep. CLXXXVIII, Canon 1 (p. 23).

The statement, **Who are Members of the Church?** is a significant contribution to the ecumenical discussion on the nature of the church. The doctrine of the church is the main burning issue at any ecumenical gathering. The statement takes one aspect of this question and illuminates it. The main lesson we may draw from this essay is that the unity of the church will not be helped by ambiguous or inadequate statements and pronouncements, but only by facing the question in all its difficulties and trying to define it on the basis of Scripture and the Tradition of the Church.

Who are Members of the Church? is a timely treatise, and we may be thankful to American Church Publication for reprinting it.

Veselin Kesich



S. A. Levitzky. THE TRAGEDY OF FREEDOM (in Russian) Publishing Co "Possev", Frankfurt am Main. (West — Germany) 1958, pp. 350

It is a philosophical not a political book. It considers the tragedy of Freedom from a metaphysical point of view — of the ultimate spiritual freedom, comprising the danger of surrender to the chaotic powers of Evil Lawlessness and Destruction and on the other hand, the possibility of a free self-dedication to the service of Good: the language is clear forcible and expressive, the philosophical culture of the author is very high, his knowledge of the earlier philosophical tradition and also of all the, leading exponents of contemporary philosophical thought is very great. The author continues the best traditions of Kirkegaard, Heidegger, Sartre, Jaspers and Nicholas Berdyaeff. Those pages (247-294) are especially good. All in all this book is a worthy and valuable in a chain of great philosophical tradition.

Nicholas Arseniev



